

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

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S E C R E T NAIROBI 8621

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KE, SO, US

SUBJECT: KENYAN GOVERNMENT UPDATE ON RELATIONS WITH SOMALIA

REF: MOGADISCIO 1112 AND PREVIOUS

1. SUMMARY. KENYA FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL HAS ADVISED EMBASSY THAT SOMALI SHIFTA FORCES HAVE LEFT KENYAN TERRITORY FOR ETHIOPIA AND THAT SOMALIA HAS JUST ANSWERED KENYA'S OFFICIAL PROTEST BY PROPOSING FORMATION OF JOINT BORDER COMMISSION. WHILE KENYANS WILL CONSIDER PROPOSAL, THEY NEVERTHELESS BELIEVE THAT SOMALIA NOW LAUNCHING MAJOR EFFORT TO SEIZE ETHIOPIAN TERRITORY WHICH, IF SUCCESSFUL, COULD IN TIME LEAD TO SIMILAR ACTION AGAINST KENYA. NEVERTHELESS,

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KENYA PREPARED TO CONSIDER MEANINGFUL IMPROVEMENT IN ITS RELATIONS WITH SOMALIA AND HOPES THAT CURRENT U.S. INITIATIVES TOWARD SOMALIA MIGHT BRING THIS ABOUT. WHILE KENYA WOULD WELCOME ECONOMIC AID FROM WESTERN AND OTHER SOURCES TO ENABLE SOMALIA TO LESSEN ITS DEPENDENCE ON SOVIET UNION, KENYAN OFFICIAL STRUCK IMPORTANT CAUTIONARY NOTE RE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH

ANY WESTERN ARMS MIGHT BE SUPPLIED TO SOMALIA. END SUMMARY.

2. IN COURSE OF JULY 8 CALL AT KENYA FOREIGN MINISTRY, DCM LINDSTROM ASKED PERMSEC NG'ANG'A FOR UPDATE ON CURRENT KENYA-SOMALIA RELATIONS FOLLOWING RECENT ARMED CLASH BETWEEN SOMALIA SHIFAS AND KENYA ARMED FORCES IN NORTHEAST KENYA.

3. NG'ANG'A SAID THAT KENYA GOVERNMENT HAD JUST RECEIVED FORMAL REPLY TO ITS PROTEST TO SOMALIA OVER INCIDENT. ESSENCE OF REPLY WAS THAT ONLY ETHIOPIAN QUOTE FREEDOM FIGHTERS UNQUOTE HAD BEEN INVOLVED AND THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO INVOLVEMENT OF REGULAR ARMED FORCES OF SOMALIA. SOMALIA ALSO PROPOSED FORMATION OF JOINT BORDER COMMISSION BY TWO COUNTRIES TO CONSIDER THIS INCIDENT AS WELL AS ANY OTHERS WHICH MIGHT OCCUR IN FUTURE. SOMALIS ASSERTED SUCH A COMMISSION WOULD PREVENT MINOR BORDER INCIDENTS FROM ESCALATING INTO MAJOR CONFRONTATIONS. HE SAID KENYA GOVERNMENT WILL CONSIDER BORDER COMMISSION PROPOSAL, BUT ACCEPTANCE WOULD DEPEND ON PRECISE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR ITS FORMATION.

4. NG'ANG'A REITERATED HIS JUNE 30 STATEMENT TO DCM THAT RECENT BORDER INCIDENT DIFFERED FROM EARLIER INCIDENTS IN SEVERAL RESPECTS: AN UNPRECEDENTED NUMBER OF SHIFAS HAD BEEN INVOLVED, ARMED CLASHES WITH KENYA ARMED
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FORCES HAD RESULTED, AND SHIFAS HAD BEEN LED BY OFFICERS OF REGULAR SOMALIA ARMED FORCES. INCIDENT, THEREFORE, CLEARLY CONSTITUTED VIOLATION OF 1967 ARUSHA ACCORD WHICH HAD ENDED FOUR YEAR SHIFA WAR BETWEEN KENYA AND SOMALIA. NG'ANG'A SAID THAT IF SOMALIA REALLY WISHES TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH KENYA, IT WILL NOT ONLY HAVE TO AVOID SUCH INCIDENTS IN FUTURE, BUT WILL HAVE TO RENOUNCE ITS IRREDENTIST CLAIMS TO NORTHEASTERN KENYA. HE EXPRESSED DOUBT, HOWEVER, THAT PRESIDENT SAID WOULD BE ABLE TO REMAIN IN POWER IF HE WERE TO RENOUNCE THESE CLAIMS.

5. IN MEANTIME, WHILE KENYA GOVERNMENT REALIZES THAT CURRENT LARGE SCALE SHIFA ASSULT ON ETHIOPIA NOT NOW AIMED AT KENYA, KENYA WILL NOT AID AND ABET SUCH ATTACKS THROUGH ITS TERRITORY ON ITS ETHIOPIAN ALLY. IN LONGER TERM, NG'ANG'A SAID THAT KENYANS BELIEVE THAT SOMALIA'S CONQUEST OF ALL OR PART OF ETHIOPIAN OGADEN WOULD ONLY WHET ITS APPETITE AND CAPABILITY FOR SEIZURE OF KENYAN TERRITORY WHICH IT CLAIMS.

6. DESPITE THIS PESSIMISTIC LONGER-TERM ASSESSMENT,

NG'ANG'A SAID THAT KENYA IS PREPARED TO CONSIDER MEANINGFUL IMPROVEMENT IN ITS RELATIONS WITH SOMALIA AND WOULD WELCOME BEING KEPT INFORMED ON ANY U.S. INITIATIVES TOWARD SOMALIA WHICH MIGHT BRING ABOUT THIS RESULT. HE SAID THAT FOREIGN MINISTER WAIYAKI HAD RECENTLY TOLD BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARY DAVID OWEN THAT KENYA WOULD PREFER TO SEE SOMALIA DISASSOCIATE ITSELF FROM THE SOVIET UNION AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT WESTERN AND ARAB COUNTRIES COULD PROMPTLY DECIDE TO PROVIDE NECESSARY AID (MAINLY ECONOMIC) TO ENABLE SOMALIA TO DO SO.

7. WHILE KENYA WOULD NOT OBJECT TO LIMITED REPLACEMENT OF SOMALIA'S SOVIET ARMS BY ARMS FROM WESTERN SOURCES, NG'ANG'A STRESSED THAT THIS WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO
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KENYA ONLY IF SOMALIA (A) WERE TO RENOUNCE COVINCINGLY ITS IRREDENTIST CLAIMS ON KENYAN TERRITORY AND (B) WERE TO MAINTAIN ITS ARMED FORCES AT A MUCH MORE MODEST LEVEL APPROPRIATE TO DEFENSE OF SOMALIA'S PRESENT BORDERS.

8. NG'ANG'A CONFIRMED THAT ALL SOMALIA SHIFTA FORCES HAD NOW LEFT KENYAN TERRITORY AND HAD ENTERED ETHIOPIA. HE SAID KENYANS ANTICIPATED NO FURTHER ARMED CLASHES AT THIS TIME.
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